

National School Lunch Program (NSLP)

Seven-day Lunch Meal Patterns for Grades K-5, 6-8, and 9-12

School Year 2021-22 (July 1, 2021, through June 30, 2022)

Food Components ¹	Grades K-5		Grades 6-8		Grades 9-12	
	Daily	Weekly ²	Daily	Weekly ²	Daily	Weekly ²
Milk, fluid (cups) ³ Unflavored low-fat (1%) milk or unflavored or flavored fat-free milk	1	7	1	7	1	7
Fruits (cups) ⁴ Fruit juice cannot exceed half of the weekly fruits	½	3½	½	3½	1	7
Vegetables (cups) ⁵ Vegetable juice cannot exceed half of the weekly vegetables	¾	5¼	¾	5¼	1	7
Dark green ^{5, 6}	0	½	0	½	0	½
Red/orange ^{5, 7}	0	¾	0	¾	0	1¼
Beans/peas (legumes) ^{5, 8}	0	½	0	½	0	½
Starchy ^{5, 9}	0	½	0	½	0	½
Other ^{5, 10}	0	½	0	½	0	¾
Additional vegetables to reach total ^{5, 11}	0	2½	0	2½	0	3½
Grains (ounce equivalents) ¹² All grains must be whole grain-rich (WGR)	1	11-12½	1	11-14	2	14-17
Meats and meat alternates (ounce equivalents) ¹³	1	11-14	1	12½-14	2	14-17
Dietary Specifications (Nutrition Standards) <i>Daily amount based on the average for a seven-day week</i>						
Calories ^{14, 15}	550-650		600-700		750-850	
Saturated fat (percentage of total calories) ¹⁵	< 10		< 10		< 10	
Sodium (milligrams) ^{15, 16}	≤ 935		≤ 1,035		≤ 1,080	
Trans fat (grams) ¹⁵	Nutrition label or manufacturer specifications must indicate zero grams of trans fat per serving					
◀ Refer to page 2 for important menu planning notes ▶						

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Menu planning notes

- ¹ Lunches must include the minimum serving of all five components and may include larger amounts if the weekly menu meets the dietary specifications. Use the USDA's [Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs](#) (FBG) to determine the amount of purchased food that meets the requirements. For processed foods, review the product's Child Nutrition (CN) label or product formulation statement (PFS). For more information, refer to the Connecticut State Department of Education's (CSDE) resources, [Child Nutrition \(CN\) Labeling Program](#), [Product Formulation Statements](#), [Accepting Processed Product Documentation in the NSLP and SBP](#), and [Crediting Commercial Meat/Meat Alternate Products in the NSLP and SBP](#); and visit the "Crediting Commercial Processed Products" section of the CSDE's [Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage. Foods made on site must have a standardized recipe that documents crediting information. For more information, visit the "Crediting Foods Prepared on Site" section of the CSDE's [Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.
- ² A week equals seven days. This meal pattern is for schools that regularly operate on a seven-day week.
- ³ Allowable types of milk include unflavored low-fat (1%) milk and unflavored or flavored fat-free milk. Flavored low-fat milk is allowed through December 3, 2021. School food authorities (SFAs) must offer at least two different varieties and at least one milk choice must be unflavored. Whole milk and reduced-fat (2%) milk cannot be served. For more information, visit the "Milk Component for Grades K-12" section of the CSDE's [Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.
- ⁴ The fruits component includes fresh fruit; frozen fruit; dried fruit; canned fruit in juice, water, or light syrup; and pasteurized 100 percent full-strength fruit juice. Fruits credit based on volume (cups), except dried fruits credit as twice the volume served, e.g., ¼ cup of raisins credits as ½ cup of the fruits component. Fruit juice cannot exceed half of the weekly fruit offerings. The juice limit includes all sources of juice, e.g., 100 percent juice, frozen pops made from 100 percent juice, pureed fruits in smoothies, and juice from canned fruit in 100 percent juice. For best nutrition, serve whole fruits instead of juice. For more information, refer to the CSDE's resources, [Crediting Juice for Grades K-12 in the NSLP and SBP](#) and [Crediting Smoothies for Grades K-12 in the NSLP and SBP](#); and visit the "Fruits Component for Grades K-12" section of the CSDE's [Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.
- ⁵ The vegetables component includes fresh vegetables, frozen vegetables, canned vegetables, rehydrated dried vegetables, and pasteurized 100 percent full-strength vegetable juice. A serving of cooked vegetables must be drained. Dried vegetables require a PFS. Vegetables credit based on volume (cups), except raw leafy greens credit as half the volume served (e.g., 1 cup credits as ½ cup of vegetables). Vegetable juice cannot exceed half of the weekly vegetable offerings. Pureed vegetables in smoothies credit only as juice. For more information, refer to the CSDE's resource, [Vegetable Subgroups in the NSLP](#); and visit the "Vegetables Component for Grades K-12" section of the CSDE's [Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.
- ⁶ Examples of the dark green subgroup include bok choy, broccoli, collard greens, dark green leafy lettuce, kale, mesclun, mustard greens, romaine lettuce, spinach, turnip greens, and watercress.
- ⁷ Examples of the red/orange subgroup include acorn squash, butternut squash, carrots, pumpkin, tomatoes, tomato juice, and sweet potatoes.
- ⁸ Examples of the beans and peas (legumes) subgroup include black beans, black-eyed peas (mature, dry), garbanzo beans (chickpeas), kidney beans, lentils, navy beans, soy beans, split peas, and white beans. Note: Green peas, green lima beans, and green (string) beans are not legumes and are not in this subgroup.

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Menu planning notes, *continued*

- ⁹ Examples of the starchy subgroup include black-eyed peas (not dry), corn, cassava, green bananas, green peas, green lima beans, parsnips, plantains, taro, water chestnuts, and white potatoes.
- ¹⁰ The “other” subgroup includes all other vegetables such as artichokes, asparagus, avocado, beets, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, cauliflower, celery, cucumbers, eggplant, green beans, green peppers, iceberg lettuce, mushrooms, okra, onions, turnips, wax beans, and zucchini. The “other” vegetables requirement may be met with any additional amounts from the dark green, red/orange, and beans/peas (legumes) subgroups, but not the starchy subgroup.
- ¹¹ Any vegetable subgroup may be offered as additional vegetables to meet the total weekly vegetable requirements.
- ¹² All grains must be WGR. WGR foods contain at least 50 percent whole grains, any remaining grains are enriched, and any noncreditable grains are less than 2 percent ($\frac{1}{4}$ ounce equivalent) of the product formula. The serving size must meet the required weight or volume in the USDA’s Exhibit A chart (refer to [Grain Ounce Equivalents for Grades K-12 in the NSLP and SBP](#)) or provide the minimum creditable grains (refer to [Calculation Methods for Crediting Grains for Grades K-12 in the NSLP and SBP](#)). Menus must meet the minimum weekly ounce equivalents. The maximum weekly ounce equivalents are not required, but provide a guide for planning age-appropriate meals that meet the dietary specifications. For more information, refer to the CSDE’s resources, [Meeting the Whole Grain-rich Requirement for the NSLP and SBP Meal Patterns for Grades K-12](#), [Crediting Enriched Grains in the NSLP and SBP](#), and [Crediting Breakfast Cereals for Grades K-12 in the NSLP and SBP](#); and visit the “Grains Component for Grades K-12” section of the CSDE’s [Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.
- ¹³ Menus must meet the minimum weekly ounce equivalents. The maximum weekly ounce equivalents are not required, but provide a guide for planning age-appropriate meals that meet the dietary specifications. The serving size refers to the edible portion of cooked lean meat, poultry, or fish as served, e.g., cooked lean meat without bone, breading, binders, extenders, or other ingredients. One ounce equivalent equals 1 ounce of lean meat, poultry, or fish; 1 ounce of cheese (low-fat recommended); 2 ounces of cottage or ricotta cheese (low-fat recommended); $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of cooked beans and peas (legumes); $\frac{1}{2}$ large egg; 2 tablespoons of nut butters; 1 ounce of nuts or seeds; $\frac{1}{4}$ cup (2.2 ounces) of commercial tofu containing at least 5 grams of protein; 1 ounce of tempeh; 3 ounces of surimi; $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of yogurt or soy yogurt; and 1 ounce of alternate protein products (APPs). APPs must meet the USDA’s requirements in [appendix A](#) of the NSLP regulations (7 CFR 210). Creditable nuts and seeds include almonds, Brazil nuts, cashews, filberts, macadamia nuts, peanuts, pecans, walnuts, pine nuts, pistachios, pumpkin seeds, sunflower seeds, and soy nuts. Nuts and seeds cannot credit for more than half of the meat/meat alternates component. For more information, refer to the CSDE’s resources, [Crediting Commercial Meat/Meat Alternate Products in the NSLP and SBP](#), [Crediting Deli Meats in the NSLP and SBP](#), [Crediting Legumes in the NSLP and SBP](#), [Crediting Nuts and Seeds in the NSLP and SBP](#), [Crediting Tofu and Tofu Products in the NSLP and SBP](#), and [Requirements for Alternate Protein Products in the NSLP and SBP](#); and visit the “Meat/Meat Alternates Component for Grades K-12” section of the CSDE’s [Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.
- ¹⁴ The lunch menu’s average daily calories for a seven-day school week must be at least the minimum value, but cannot exceed the maximum value.
- ¹⁵ Meals may include discretionary sources of calories (solid fats and added sugars) if the weekly menu meets the dietary specifications. For information on the dietary specifications, refer to section 6 of the CSDE’s [Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12](#), and visit the “Dietary Specifications (Nutrition Standards for School Meals)” section of the CSDE’s [Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.
- ¹⁶ Weekly lunch menus must meet the second sodium target. For more information, refer to the CSDE’s resource, [Sodium Reduction Timeline for the NSLP and SBP](#).

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For more information, review the Connecticut State Department of Education's (CSDE) guide, [Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12](#), and visit the CSDE's [Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in School Nutrition Programs](#) and [Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpages, or contact the [school nutrition programs staff](#) in the CSDE Bureau of Health/Nutrition, Family Services and Adult Education, 450 Columbus Boulevard, Suite 504, Hartford, CT 06103-1841.

This document is available at <https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/MealPattern/NSLPmealpattern7day.pdf>.

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